



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

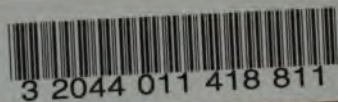
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

Educ
8308
28



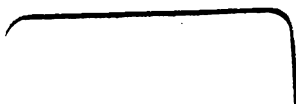
O'Sullivan - Female Education - 1828

duc 8308-28

Harvard College
Library



By Exchange



2. 7.

Aug.



0

A

SERIES OF LECTURES

ON

FEMALE EDUCATION;

BY

B. O'SULLIVAN.

COMPRISED

IN TWELVE NUMBERS;

NO. I.

WASHINGTON:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1828.

5

■■■■■■■■■■

Educ 8308.28

HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY
BY EXCHANGE, FROM THE
LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Dec 31, 1930

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA, to wit:

(L. S.) BE IT REMEMBERED, That, on the third day of May, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and twenty eight, and of the independence of the United States of America the fifty-second, B. O'Sullivan, of the said district, has deposited in the office of the Clerk of the District Court for the District of Columbia, the title of a book, the right whereof the said B. O'Sullivan claims as author and proprietor, in the words following, to wit:

"A series of Lectures on Female Education, by B. O'Sullivan. Comprised in twelve numbers."

In conformity to the act of the Congress of the United States, entitled "An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of *maps, charts, and books*, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned;" and, also, to the act, entitled "An act supplementary to an act, entitled 'An act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of *Maps, Charts and Books*, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned,' and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, and etching, historical and other prints."

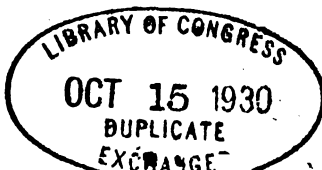
In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the public seal of my office, the day and year aforesaid

EDMUND I. LEE,

Clerk of the Court for the District of Columbia.

ERRATA.

page	line	for	say
6	44	of	to
	1	lecture	lectures
7	36	of things	of self and things
8	30	greater advantages than	as great advantages as
10	4	now	now,
10	4	not that;	not that?
10	4	that	it
12	16	it as	it is as
15	25	earthly	earthly
16	12	females	female
16	12	show	shows
16	13	their	her
16	22	with the	with it the
19	10	frozen	frozen to
20	11	having been	pre existence.
20	34	Vida	Veda
22	33	energy	inertia
22	28	Britanicae	Britanica
23	25	to the	to be the



INTRODUCTORY LECTURE,
ON
FEMALE EDUCATION,
GIVEN
AT WASHINGTON,
BY
B. O'SULLIVAN.

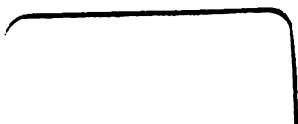
Honourable Hearers!—I come before you, accompanied by great and peculiar disadvantages. I shall waive the mention of those, that rest on conjectures, and arise from personalities, as being irrelevant to the considerations *DUE to myself*, and most adverse to the respect I *owe* you. Besides, I part with such reflections the more readily, feeling myself secured in that delicate forbearance, which is a certain feature of the American character. There is also, methinks, in the subject, connected with what may be the nature of *those* reflections, a decisiveness of proceedings on my side, that bespeaks, at once, the light and manner, in which it is required the circumstance should be considered, and, to say the least in favor of this reasoning, every chaste mind will be aware that the anatomy of the *soul* offers greater advantages, and should supersede that of the body. But as already said, this shall not be a matter of present import. I cannot, however, equally pass over in silence, some *other* of the prominent obstacles that have impeded and do still impede my endeavours in this, my first public essay at being useful. With a view of claiming your indulgence as regards *those* also, I beg leave to state, that, though a native of Ireland, my mother tongue, the English, (if indeed a tongue forced on us by the proud nation of which it bears the name, can by us, Irish, be called a mother tongue,) was not made known to me, till after having arrived at the age of seventeen, when emerging from the gloomy but calm solitude of the monastic walls in which I had been immured from the tender age of two, I arrived in London. There, da-

duc 9368-28

**Harvard College
Library**



By Exchange



ring a residence of three years, I did acquire some readiness in the English language, but at the same time, an exceedingly false aspiration of it, prevalent in that place. Since then, except the portion of it, which I have spent in the United States, and even that, from a most harsh destiny, was little aiding to improvement of any sort, the greater part of my time has been whiled away in foreign countries, seldom speaking English, and never good English. The consequence of this is, that now, in the use of that tongue, I labour under the greatest difficulties, both as to fluency of words, and more particularly as regards a correct idiom and pronunciation, and the harmonious sensibility of accents and sounds. Again, as relates to the matter itself of the following lecture, I am necessitated to say, that it is but crudely laid down; not but I had the intention of giving it, and those of which this is but an introduction, at a future day, still I did not mean to do so now, and have been hurried to it by newly awakened motives. The unfavorable effect of this premature arrangement is, that, not having with me a number of interesting and well digested notes, which I had composed at leisure, I have to depend, solely, upon some of the single views I have taken of the subject.

It is evident, that with so little merit on the score of language, style, and fulness of composition, Washington ought to have been the last place I should have chosen to make a trial of so poor a skill.

These objections considered, it can, and may be asked, why, *thus* circumstanced, and with prospects so little encouraging, I should lecture at all. What motives could induce me to mount so dangerous an ascent as that to public notice, divested, as I am, of any of the usual supports.

This indeed is a nice, a very nice question, too immediately touching at our most secret instincts not to make an answer—a direct one I mean—somewhat embarrassing. Were I allowed to substitute a figure, I would say, that the heart of man is not unlike a sort of polypus, branching out in manifold appetites, each, however, having life but by suction from its parent core: this last we know must be filled with healthy blood; else the whole animal becomes nerveless, it sickens, it corrupts. I believe, I have said, and if not, I *now* say, that my first and fondest wish is to be useful to society. If I should succeed in this, what matters it that a myriad of subordinate sentiments should participate in my success? and if I may be at liberty to argue from my own opinions, I would say, that whenever a man's actions tend, unequivocally, directly, and with *will*, tend to

some public good, *that* which he also thereby means to nourish within, ought, in truth and in justice, to be left under the sacred cover of his own *privy seal*.

I grant that man is a social being, and as such, it results that his doings are amenable to the tribunal of society, taken on the whole, or as regards the particular circle or circles of which he is a revolving part. But it is those doings (I press closely upon the subject, it is of importance *to me*, and still more to *the cause* I have embraced, that my opinion of it should be clearly understood) I repeat, it is those doings alone, that can and *do* have an influence on, and touch the entire or any part or parts of the multiplicities of chains of which he forms a link, that of *right* must be submitted to the judgment and controlling will of the part or parts, which they are calculated either directly or remotely to affect.

Far different, however, are the laws, as regards the workings within—within each man's breast and scull, those natural ramparts against encroachment; meant, one would think, to bar the invading curiosity of idleness. *These* workings, I say, are his own, exclusively his own; yes! and all the reasonings that tongues can utter, and pens write, cannot say *no*! *He*, the great master Workman that fashioned the heart and brain, and placed them in the close and intricate foldings in which they are wrapped, willed it so. No! when man shall be wizard enough to discover an *unerring* way by which he can guide the thoughts and feelings of his fellow men; then, and then only, shall he have the right of pursuing them through all the mazes of their multiplied and incessant cogitations.

I know not what others may think on this subject, but as to myself, I am sensibly aware, that this property of secretly hoarding, if I may use the term, of secretly hoarding, within ourselves, whatever emotion we please, be it of grief or of joy, is one of the happiest economy of our being. It makes us rich in poverty, strong when *weak*, and is perhaps the only consolation that can sooth the anguish of being exiled from every endearing human tie. Shall it then not be respected?—Shall we not venerate it in *ourselves*? Shall we not be delicate of it in others? One too, perchance, whose heart is filled with woe—with incurable woe—the conscious victim of an early unmerited destiny—whose *destroying will* has driven him from his native path—removed him from the benign influence of his own sphere—leaving him deserted and helpless. Yes, if we despise the man, who chatters forth his every secret care, how much more should we not abhor the *one*, who would licence his

vulgar gaze, to intrude into such a habitation of sorrow, rendered sacred by the magnitude of its own wretchedness!

From what has been said, I would conclude, that each man's private feelings, sentiments, intentions, motives, and even passions, (this last is only either of *the others* in a higher, or the highest possible degree,) are his own, indisputably his own property; and at which not any one has the least right to grasp. If those feelings, sentiments, intentions, motives or passions, harmonize with, and *conduct* him to, any or more of those actions that have a beneficial bearing on the well-being of society, he will be called a more or less *useful* man. This capacity of being useful, arises from two causes; first, in a series of early impressions, which makes a certain tone of feelings *easy*, because habitual; in the second place, the capacity of being useful, is the result of a *steadfast will*, originating in reflections. The man acting under the influence of the first cause, is denominated a good, kindly disposed man, a humane man. *He*, however, who is urged by the last, is named, *and known to be*, a principled man, a man acting from *principle*, not therefore the slave of vacillation, but the supporter of truth. Not only the whole of the above remarks, but more particularly the last, is expressly appropriate to the intention of the lectures, of which, the following is the introduction. Those lectures will treat of *Female Education*.

In this introduction to a series of lectures on *Female Education*, I will take into consideration some of the leading obstacles that are brought in the way of a *rational system of female education*.

I think it will be proper, first, to beg your indulgence to one remark; this is, that independently of the difficulties already mentioned as standing between me and the possibility of an always appropriate choice of words, I am, on the other hand, not disposed to use any such, the merit of which is only drawn from fashion. If I will be understood at all, I must first comprehend myself, and that I can do, but by using words that have a definite idea; not those that effect only a vaporish moving-about of unconnected conceptions. The English *fashionable talk* is more particularly crowded with that kind of meaningless words. I mean those terms called *genteel language*. I am most unopportunity prejudiced against the generic or specific terms, genteel and gentility—they present to my mind the idea of things so extremely *diminutive*, that it baffles my patience to search in them for the good they may contain. It was no doubt that kind of language which a celebrated Latin author thought of, when

he says; "women do talk prettily, they talk neatly." The old English chronicler meant the same also, when he writes; "they drawl out," meaning the women, "their words so lank and meagre, that they seem as if faint and sick, and wanting a bowl of posset." For example, if I speak the word *lady*, pronounced with its thin English sound, not any complete image is thereby brought before my imagination; but if, on the contrary, the word *woman* strikes my ear, instantaneously a distinct object stands before me, it is there perfect in all its parts, and without the least effort I comprehend this object in all its individuality, in all its relations. And since in this genteel world of ours, we give fanciful ideas to terms sounding most insignificantly, why shall we not see *beauties* in those, that speak themselves so full of meaning? Allow me for a moment to speculate on the word *woman*: first, the word *man*, (which by the bye we know to originate in *one* more applicable to the female sex than the other,) I repeat; the word *man*, preceded by the syllable *wo*; this last, composed of the round, the perfect sound *o*, with the additional fulness given to it by the mixed sound and articulation of *w*, and which syllable *wo*, *en*soning as it were, the word *man*; makes it *wo-man*, that is, man more perfect, more complete, more effectual. Thus at least would this word have been resolved by a Plutarch; by the writers on female worth of the sixteenth and fifteenth centuries, and even farther back, when the first dawn of learning, that broke through the darkness of ignorance, which had so long covered the face of Europe, was marked by a *sainted veneration* for the female sex. However this is but speculation, and I merely mean to advance, that I wish to call *women* to a sense of what they are *now*, compared with *what* they have been, and may *still* be. I wish to awaken them from their present lethargy; consequently my language must not be of a character to *lull*, but to *rouse*!

Alas! I have no interest in *this*; and if I must again speak of myself, I will repeat, I have not any private interest to serve in the present attempt. The evening of my *life's day* is drawing near; its earliest dawn was marked by the unpropitious desertion of a mother, and the consequent deprivation of all *pater-nal* influence and solicitude. The morn of my life was clouded by ignorance, caprice, and superstition, and my ascent to its noon was wearisome, unaided, unguarded, uncheered by the laughing joys, the consonant feelings, the warming interest, that gladdens, *understands*, and protects youth. In those days I was very wretched, my best fondness was thwarted, all that I loved taken from me, as if but the toys of caprice or

fashion; my complaints, my beseechings trampled down, as if but the writhings of the meanest worm; for me the great laws of nature were broken through as if but cobwebs. Then I was pale, and thin, and nervous, I had lost the faculty of taste, I soon lost that of feeling too, all within me, and out of me was nearly consumed, and many hours of my life became a blank; yet, at last, I did attain to its noon day! There suddenly the meridian burst forth in all its splendour over me, in all its vivifying warmth I felt it: from the ashes of my former self, a new being arose, endowed, 'tis true, with the recollection of the past, but gifted, also, with the recognizance of its own power and will over the future. The broad light of noon day fell on each and all the surrounding objects; and to go down this hill of human journey, I chose the path—myself chose the path, along which I now move towards my evening rest. The way I have chosen is a lonely one, I avow; but during that part of the day of life, at which the heart wants company, was I not alone? Left too, in a solitude so dismal, so arid, that it had not even the faintest echo of a sigh—not the moisture of a tear—what matters it now, that, arrived at an age when man can be alone, I should be so; and if no kind hand aided and guided my morning ascent, what need should I have of support *now*, that I am gently descending towards that *spot* which I *surely* shall reach, and without the necessity of aid.

Yet we cling to the past; there is a charm even in the recollection of past wretchedness, so it bring back to the mind its darling youthful days. There is a harmony of beauty in youth, which pencils the darkest scenes with some softening shadows of light. It is through these longings of recollections that *nature* proves the power she has over humanity. The imperceptible cords by which she holds mastery over the heart, and which in the buoyancy and violence of youth were not felt, thrills us now with silent, but milder joy. They bring *man* back again to *man*, with whom he at least communes in imagination. For we cannot separate ourselves from the thoughts of our fellow beings; our every action, and motive, and sensation centres there, and it is only when we are robbed of even these imaginings that we find ourselves alone.

From this little sketch of my story, I can substantiate to you one important fact; namely, that you may place some confidence in whatever I shall say that bears the appearance of being worthy of it, because it is not the fruit of *book learning* and of speculative inquiries, but of dear bought experience. Without detaining you longer, I now enter on the introduction of my

proposed lecture, and speak of the great obstacles that are brought in the way of a *just* and rational system of Female Education.

If education taken in a general sense is an object most worthy of our consideration, how much more important does it not become, when it has for its object that particular portion of it, called female education. There could not have been a happier choice from which to compose the matter of a lecture than *this*; for whilst it is scarcely possible not to represent this subject in one or another interesting point of view; in *itself*, it is connected with our dearest inclinations, as also in *its success* lies our only chance of happiness. Forever blessed be that land, where unrestrained investigations in this important purpose are not cramped by the iron wedge of *low* prejudices, ignorance, superstition, and fanaticism! May that people ever prosper, in the midst of whom a stranger, unknown and lowly, can boldly stand, affirm his opinions on this great, but *tender* point, and be heard! And ah! may the subject itself appear, what cannot be done by my agency, robed in its inherent beauties, truth and usefulness.

The female creation may be called, and is, in fact, the centre of creation, round which all revolve, from which all spring. Shall then a centre be less than its rays, a whole less than a part? reason forbids this. Yet rays are necessary to originate a centre; parts to make a whole; nor can we figure to ourselves the possibility that either can be without the other, their existence being relative; the allusion is clear, and suits my purpose. I am perfectly satisfied to admit, that the female world is only a part, a necessary, an indispensable, relative equal part of all creation. My object now, is, only to inquire how this so essential a portion in the order of things, can be made to answer its end, that is, how it shall be educated.

It is not of female education, taken in the common acceptation of the term, that I am now to speak; that is as regards schooling, musick, drawing, literature, domestic economy, &c. &c. These are not education; certainly they are means for contingencies, and will do in their place; but cannot be called the knowledge of things; and all we have to say on that head, is to hope that we may soon come to a method, an order by which these acquirements may really and properly be had, not made a pretence of as is made of *that* and of all else, and every other circumstance, and subject of life in which women are concerned. I shall perhaps call these reflections to mind at an early day, or some one more able than myself, may supersede me; be

this as it will, every exertion, however humble, is praiseworthy if its object be to *root* out from among us, that *furnished devourer* of every tender scion of nature, ignorance, *ignorance in women!*

I have heard some of the academicians of European learning, say, that here, in America, would blazon forth in the field of sciences, things of which their eyes could scarcely bear the faintest glimmering; objects too great for their mind to have a conception of; too magnificent and vast for their narrow compass of imagination to embrace. Where then will be woman? or shall she not make a part in this triumph of human intellect? In a country, where all things seem to have regenerated, shall not woman regenerate too? Shall there be a continued progressive march for all but her? There she is, a dead weight in the scale of improvement; just to-day as she was a thousand years ago, nay, as man advances she seems to retrograde. They, the men, appear each day to drop off more and more the rust of ignorance; she, however, one would think, is more and more corroded by it. Can we not effect a change; a mild and gradual change? let us endeavor so, now is the time if it ever is to be—now is the proper moment to ascertain if *women* are rational beings; and it is in *this country* only that this happy change can take place—this important truth be ascertained. On the continent of *Europe*, women, from the character of the governments, the climates, the produce, and the customs, are satisfied with the apparent possession of at least an equal share of advantage with the men. They feel not that they are actually considered less than them, and want, consequently, that energy, which originates but in a sense of wrong. Besides, upon the whole, women have there greater advantages than the men. In monarchical countries, and where a political rank exists, a number of the women have necessarily a portion of supremacy, and which in them helps to support those of their sex of the humbler classes. Their wealth and power, or circumstances of interest, making them the patronizer of the arts; often too the stepping aid to ambition, and always the benefactors of the poor; they are celebrated, adulated and receive the tribute of gratitude: and besides they are, we know, the principal pageants of courts and palaces. From a different source too, in those countries, the women do not feel the pressure of customs on their liberty, so much as they do here. In Germany, where women hold a higher rational standing than do those of any other country, they being equally responsible with men, and that though they be wives. This originates in them an additional incentive to self-respect and

with that, to the habit of every social virtue; and as with them, to be early taught the art of self-government is a consequence of what will be their future responsibility, the effects, are that fewer domestic disorders happen in that country than in most others we hear of. In France and Holland, marriage does not deprive women of the right of property, a great advantage this to them. In Italy, who can rob the happy woman of her skies! then she has her immortal champions, a Bocacio, a Tasso, a Ruscelli; this last, who giving himself up to the most passionate admiration of the sex, asserts, that men on this earth could be happy but in the contemplation of women:—a thought, truly descriptive of the necessity of ever loving, peculiar to the Italians. Amid the snows and glaciers of Switzerland, both the husband and the wife, are glad to make one simple, and equally united pair. The nearer to the chills of the mountains, the more this fact of being drawn closer to each other is observable. When I visited the president of the canton Uri, at Altorff, nearly at the foot of the Gothard, I found him transacting the affairs of state, by the side of his wife, who was spinning, and with whom he communicated on the most important occasions. In that place I met with the same simplicity, which we may suppose to have marked the manners of the honest Swiss, in the days of Tell. At Berne, however, Monsieur le President was already too great a man to have preserved the habits of such a primitive plainness—so assuredly is fashion calculated to destroy every domestic virtue. In my poor country, Ireland, a green isle, 'tis true, but there, both men and women being alike the victims of tyranny and of hunger, have not time to think of their moral state. Here, however, *here* the book of woman's worth and rights is not yet written on. Its broad and fair pages await, that the genius of truth shall stamp them with the lines and characters of her wisdom; shall we not be vigilant, lest some angry inimical spirit breathe on them its baneful purposes, and tarnish forever their purity? Besides, I ask you, Americans! how think you, to support long this grand machine of your government, if woman guard it not? What says Plutarch, that great critic on men and things? thus he speaks: "the most solid pillar of republican liberty, is to be found but in the vigour and honour of the women." Who will not listen, when as a proof of how sensible women are of the advantages of liberty and of honour, he relates the story of a woman of Sparta, who being taken prisoner, and sold to slavery, was asked by her master: "what dost

thou know?" "to be free!" answered the Spartan maid. Speaking of slavery, forces me to digress from my subject, by one reflection; *whitemen* in those days were made slaves of, as the poor blacks are now, know we not that? let the supporters of slavery bear it in mind, and imagine that for every lash they now inflict on their unfortunate servants, their own children may carry the wounds of as many more stripes:—but one revolution of things is wanted to effect this, and who can insure us that our children shall not see and feel that revolution? but to return to my subject. The free-born female of Sparta just spoken of being again ordered by the said master to accomplish an offensive act, exclaimed: "Thou didst not deserve me;" after which this heroic woman dies! Think you, this vigour, this high sense of honour in this Spartan woman was the effect of ignorance? True, she did not, perhaps, know how to flourish a few airs on the keys of a piano, draw flower-pots, spout a jargon of chymical or astronomical catechism, she perhaps spoke only Greek, her native tongue; nevertheless, however, she had been educated; yes, in the strictest sense of the term, she had been educated, she had been taught to know herself; to be sensible of her own intent, and the *dignity* of that intent; in short she knew and felt she was a woman.

I do not mean to say, that female improvement has not been a circumstance earnestly wished for by some of the best men in this country that society ever produced. We mourn this day the irreparable loss of *one* of its most constant champions; a Clinton is no more! We have still a few such men among us; yes, thank God! we have, a chosen few, before whose enlightened perception the dark curtain of ignorance, which, for centuries, hung over the minds, is torn asunder. They, these men of souls, have come to the rational recognizance, that whilst ignorance is the *hot-bed* of vice, imperfections and follies of every sort; its opposite, knowledge, is the parent of *order*; the fosterer of virtue; the tabernacle of truth; the foundation stone of the universe.

Yet, there have been; nay there are now, men of talents, who hold forth, very different, and I may say, degrading opinions as respects the capacity of knowledge in the female sex. However, the days of Oracles are gone by, and such men deserve not our credence but our pity. Many of them too, find an excuse in their being influenced, or better to say, governed by those, most of all swaying despots, early prejudices, and long habits. Others have mistaken accidental defects for inherent things; and the rest have been actuated by feelings arising from the bitterness of disappointed passions.

But the worst enemies to female improvements, are to be found in its very friends, and in females *themselves*. I will prove this, by taking a cursory view of the greatest obstacles, that are stated to be to the disadvantage of women's acquiring knowledge.

It is a lamentable fact, that the effect of early prejudices is so inveterate, that even among the most strenuous advocates for female

improvement, some there are, and those among the worthiest of them, who still take affright at the bug-bear; a learned woman will not do for a wife; she will not make a good mother, an economical house-keeper, she will be above attending to the many little matters necessary to the comfort of a family, and what more. In relation to this *first* objection to females coming at knowledge, I recollect to have read, when a child, of a certain ancient sage, who says that a philosopher would, if necessary, make as good a pair of shoes as any professed shoemaker; meaning, thereby, that philosophy fits us for every employment in life, even those of the less studious kind. The application is evident. But I will bring the answer more home, and with the earnestness it deserves.

I would ask you, who so readily resign yourselves to what you think necessary ignorance in women, whether you ever seriously reflected on the subject, unbiased by the influence of your habits? Did you ever, I ask, form to your mind a well-systematised hypothesis, under which, the female sex would appear more consistently a rational, a useful sex, mind, I do not mean merely as relates to women in a sexual, but in a social, a rational point of view; then, farther, after having composed this system, have you compared its probable effects on society with what *now* exists in it? No! you have not, you could not have done so, else it is positive that a change, a total change would have long ere this taken place. Do we not gladly seek to relieve ourselves of some heavy burden, that perchance we have to bear, some disease which menaces to destroy us? Almighty powers! can there be a greater burden, a sorer ailment, than ignorance in women. Open, I beseech you, open your eyes on the scenes that surround us in the midst of a large city, for example; behold the crowded courts of justice, the prisons, dungeons, bedlams, penitentiaries, hospitals; those smooth buildings, where every cunning disease, each bearing its own label, is ranged all in a row, not unlike petrefactions, in some curious man's cabinet; see that most loathsome of all human habitations, the *poor-house*; walk through each one of its wards; *here*, look at these piteous infants, born without parents, there, lie the maimed victims of drunkenness; mark those ulcerated forms; living graves; yonder in that low shed, behold that miserable woman, a mother, but not a wife, in her despair she stifles the bastard birth, and hopes to end *its* and *her* shame. But most of all, let your pitying eye rest for a moment on the pale visage of yon meagre female form, she is without ornament; how withered and melancholy she seems to droop, she cares not if her tresses be uncombed, she feels not the day is dreary, for in her poor heart is the gloom, yet she once was beauteous and gay, why is she no longer so? Ask her own sex, and their idle talk, she poor floweret was not up-borne by a *stem* vigorous enough to resist the *merciless blast* of DEFAMATION—and, as you behold, she has faded, and will soon pass away. Tell, oh! tell me, now, that you have taken a view of this panorama of human ills; tell me, I ask, what good, ignorance in women has effected?

This is no tale.—*Female Ignorance* alone has done this. That and that alone is the vampire that has been preying on the vital source of social happiness; and until that pest is removed, man must, and will continue to be miserable, mercilessly so. But let instruction be liberally distributed to women, be not ashamed, nor think it unworthy of your legislative care, to enquire if *there too*, there be not some capacity of a change for the better. Let me beseech your notice of the necessity of storing the mind of women with *useful* knowledge, make philosophers of them; yes, philosophers, *that's the term, for my meaning*, lovers of wisdom, of virtue, and of truth, make them *that*, and the miasma of corruption, and vice, and follies that now fill our every pore will be cleansed. The consequence of this moral health, this moral renovation, will be social happiness, complete and universal social happiness: for it is an axiom in morals, that knowledge produces *order*; order, virtue; and virtue happiness; and it as impossible that confusion, vice and misery should *exist* where knowledge *is*, as that summer should be winter or autumn spring.

A second obstacle brought as a reason why women of all beings should not enjoy the pre-eminent blessing intended by heaven to *human* nature, namely, that of improvement, is—I really hesitate to say it—is from an apprehension on the side of the men, (for women have not begun to think at all, as yet, either on this or any other subject, and it is no doubt this state of repose from thinking so apparent in them, that originated the idea in the mind of Mahomet, that they had no soul,) however, as I was stating, a second objection to improvement in women arises from the apprehension men are in, that it will spoil their beauty, destroy in them, *these, so called* feminine graces; rob them of all those nameless charms, with the aid of which women, weak women, to be sure, triumph over the hearts of men. It will be understood that here I do not mean to speak of that superior grace of motion, that harmony of form, those charms ever new, in which nature, in her fondest mood, has been delighted to clothe this, her favorite child, or better said, her co-equal, *woman!* No, no, these have long since been lost, or if still in being, are so disfigured and cruëted over with the fantastic mimeries of ill-taste, that even the chastest eye cannot discover a trace of their original beauty. I have a notion of studying history better than I have done, for I do think that in turning over some of its neglected worm-eaten pages, I may come to the origin of this false taste respecting women. It would perhaps not be far from the mark to attribute that tasteless notion, to an accident not unlike the fable of the fox that had lost a part of his trimmings. Some despot may have been the father of a daughter, on whom a maliciously inclined genius had been pleased to play a frolic, causing her to appear wholly divested of those transcendant, personal qualifications, with which the bounteous hand of nature had so richly gifted her sex. Consequently it is more than probable, that the mortified father issued an edict, whereby, women should, henceforth, wear none but

borrowed charms, and as we must suppose the daughter to have been exceedingly deformed, it follows that *to fit her*, those new fashioned graces, and charms, and irresistibilities, and not forgetting delicacies, must have been mis-shapen ones, at least, that which has come to us of them, proves they must have been so.

I will not say that men, good men too, and it is only to such that I address my discourse, have, and do support this absurdity in women, as best answering some of the lesser dignified purposes to which human nature, in the present state of things, is incident: a kind of selfishness in them, arising from the indolent sort of ease it gives to their still duller gratifications. No, I will not say, nor believe that; but I must advance, that it looks as if they did. I have not intended either any allusion to passion, or specifically named, love—*this* sublime feeling can find nourishment but in a purer sphere, is to be found in the bowers of nature, of uncontaminated nature only. As to the rest I will be bold to say, that with but few exceptions, most husbands, fathers, brothers, guardians, have not been so blind as at one time or another, not to have discovered, that these nameless charms so often sung by love-sick, or *starving*-sick poets, are the most insipid abortions of a senseless brain. Besides, I would ask, how many women are there, who could possibly answer to the description of those delicate, fragile, transparent forms? having eyes not to see, but to be cast down, or to weep pearly dew to soften men's hearts; cheeks, the ceaseless blushings of which would make you think, God knows what; feet not to walk, but glide; in short beings so exquisitely and femininely weak, that they are not able to preserve themselves against a total fall, should they make a false step. How many women I ask, can, or are in a situation to allow them both leisure and means to act such a shadow-like part, to be what may emphatically be called a lady? why scarcely one-tenth of them; and they, the few, that are thus privileged, how long can they enjoy that privilege? hardly a day! You see, therefore, that, that which cannot be general, which cannot endure at all times and to all times, must be false; morally false. Consequently it follows, that it should be done away with, and to *that end* I know no better hand-maid than instruction. Knowledge in women will sweep away this rubbish, brush down these cobwebs that disfigure the fairest edifice a God could build. A temple wherein his *own munificent* hand enshrined virtue and love, that there they might be preserved, a never failing fountain of life and joy.

A *third cause* which is given as an obstacle against female improvement is that they are said not to be capable of any great and serious mental action. I once had the same opinion, and that from the very natural consequence of my having been early told, it was a fact. It is lamentable to reflect, that whilst boys are taught both by words and *practices* at home, to look down on their sister, and often on their mothers, a girl's first lesson is that of being made to believe in her inferiority and weakness, both of

body and of mind. A most fatal prejudice this, as thereby, all her natural energies are smothered in their very shoot. I have seen women, wives, smooth with the tenderest care the pillow of sickness under a fractious husband's head; daughters piously waiting on the whimsies of a gouty father, a sister fondly tending the bed-side of a libertine brother, widows anxiously nourishing and raising a brood of boys, and that with ceaseless labour, I have seen mothers in the agonizing throes of birth-giving, seen their daily, *their nightly* solicitude over their infant sons, many are the *wanderers*, poor and weary, that I have known courted to rest by female charity, their wounded feet dressed with lint and soft ointments by women's kind hand, their every want supplied by her benevolence; yes I have seen too the once lovely maid, now alas! so no more—yet fondly thinking on her cruel seducer and weeping his absence: on the other side I have seen, a husband wantonly render miserable and corrode the existence of his helpless wife, a father abandoning his piteous infants, a brother branding an only sister with infamy, men in the orgies of drunkenness and debauch, whilst women are in the agony of labour or in the still greater sadness of closing the eyes of their dead babes. I have often known the widow robbed of her little pittance by *male* relatives, her children doomed to serve an unfeeling master: many are the times too, that I have witnessed the helpless female plundered, by *reputed honourable citizens*, the poor way-worn traveller betrayed by his fellow men, and, the murderer, the destroyer of the fond young maiden's peace, I have seen pitilessly drink success to new and still new projects of female despoliation; this all, and more than this all I have seen, but in the course of all my travels and observations, and these last have not been few, aided too by most peculiar situations, I never could find satisfactory proofs, whereby, to conclude that women, in point of mental powers, were inferior to men, or what will be better understood, that women in a *healthy* state, did not possess the faculty of combining their ideas and reasoning on those ideas as well as men; true, in the present state of female degradation, it would indeed seem that they are vastly inferior, nay are scarcely of the same kind with some of the few men whom we daily see, give proof of great mental capacity. This fact is what has discouraged many an attempt at ameliorating the situation of women: attempts, which it would be unjust not to say, have often been made by the *male sex itself*; they, the men, have at times made a trial of recovering the female sex from the moral degradation into which it has so long been plunged: more than once have they earnestly endeavoured to draw women out of this abyss of nothingness, of worse than nothingness; but finding no answering, corresponding aid on the part of women themselves, they have abandoned it, as a thing, which from a *dearth* of faculty in them, was impracticable, and as a circumstance, which was consequently *not to be*. Could ever conclusions be more incorrect than these? Certainly, both nature and experience prove them to be false, we might

as well advance that because the rose blooms not in Iceland, the rose tree has not the inherent capacity of putting forth a rose, as to believe, that because women, now, in the icy lap of ignorance, show no disposition to be rational, the capacity of being so is not in them. When an experienced vine-dresser sees a favorite vine becoming barren, what does he do? think you that he sits down and laments over the supposition that it has not the latent capacity of bringing forth fruit? no, he goes and examines the cause of its barrenness, and the consequence is, that he soon discovers it to exist in an entanglement of useless twigs, which preying on the stalk, waste its sap to the nourishment of mere brambles, leaving none to the circulating of the desired purple fruit; quickly he applies the pruning knife to those parasitical branches, and the vine is restored to its primitive, vigorous fecundity. So, remove the rubbish with which the female mind is *choked*, and it will burst forth in all its primitive energy. Some one, and in fact many have said, that not any more certain proof of the inferiority of the female mental capacity was wanting than their evident want of physical strength. To this I will answer, that independently of my not being at all of opinion that it is in the nature of women to be as weak in body as fashion and those so called feminine graces and delicacies have determined they shall be, and granting that women are physically weaker than men, I do not comprehend, why a certain pliability of muscles, evidently intended too, for an object that bears, not any more affinity to weakness, than that the *earthly* element is weaker than a stone, because it permits the shooting of the tenderest plants through its less compact particles, whilst the rocky parts remain aridly firm against all like penetrative impressions, shall be an indication of weakness or want of power in the mind. At that rate a horse should have a mind more energetic than a man, and yet that strong animal seems not to be conscious of his superiority over us, else where is the bit or rein that could make him our servant? We know well also that physical strength is in the muscles and bones, and that these acquire their power by appropriate exercises, the very opposite to the sedentary and inactive habits of women. The same is applicable to the mental faculties, and not any man of experience will deny, that these are more or less capable, according to the degree, and kind of cultivation they have received. There have been curious speculations made by philosophers on the difference of mental capacities: some were for attributing the distinction to the various sizes of the brain; the largest being as it was thought, capable of the greatest magnitude of thoughts; but the fact that most of the brutes have more brain than men, soon put a stop to that hypothesis. However, another philosopher (Cuvier) advances that not the whole brain is the seat of thought, but a particular portion of it, called, the *hemisphere*, and which enlarges or diminishes according to the expansion or depression given to it as the intellectual faculties are more or less developed. I am rather partial to this opinion of Cuvier, and if liberal

and intelligent women, were to grant, nay, request of a scientific and philosophic anatomist the acceptance of their heads for dissection when dead, a circumstance which by doing away the prejudice attached to like methods of inquiries, would enable us to have models for researches on that subject, the so long disputed inferiority of the female mind could either be confirmed, or what's more likely, be positively rejected. But since we prefer that the worms shall have the discovery and its fruit all to themselves, and that we think it impious to become useful to our fellow-beings after death, why we must needs limit our opinions to what we can ascertain from *observations*, the only *human method* of coming at truth.

Among very illiterate people, particularly the peasants, who, retired from even that kind of instruction got from the daily examples to be met in cities, have very limited conceptions of any thing, out of what arises from the simple impressions made on them by their natural wants, it is a fact worthy of attention, that the females generally show more intelligence, and will comprehend subjects foreign to their usual habits, quicker than the men. The reason is, that from causes arising in the varied impressions which her mind necessarily receives, in correspondence with the many and changeable affections to which her body is exposed, she has greater opportunities to think, reflect and combine her ideas of impressions, than men have. It is also a fact, not to be disputed, that the mind once awakened to cultivation on one point, is more easily perfected on every other, and as women are by nature disposed to greater affection than the men, their heart is sooner cultivated, and with the mind to which it has an immediate relation. No! Many of the greatest men of antiquity reprobated the idea of female inferiority of mind. Plutarch particularly contemned those of his time, that advanced any opinion derogatory to the dignity and the mental capacity of women; and in support of what, he states, to be the equality of the sex, he brings into parallel Sappho and Anacreon, Semiramis and Sesostris, Tanaquile and Servius, Brutus and Portia, "their talents," says he, "were modified by circumstances and persons, but the principles and powers were the same; the only difference existing, one would say, on the surface and in the colour."

But returning to what has been said of the trials, that at times, have been made to recal women to a sense of their primitive worth, I would ask, who it is, that has done so? Why, men have! and how were men able to do it? how could they say what fitted a woman? by what rules of judgment could they decide on the correct means to that end? can they even explain any of the particularities of their own individual nature? No! they cannot; then, how can they judge of that of a woman? No; a man cannot judge of a woman, and that from the very simple reason, that he cannot understand her, and is consequently ignorant of what she is capable of receiving and being. It is therefore not man, but woman that must

change, modify, and improve *that*, on which her own individual happiness depends; and, unhappily, this has not yet been earnestly attempted. We are obliged to own, that few, very few women have as yet reflected on their own situation; on what it is now, and on what it might be: and they, that have, showed themselves so influenced by their early prejudices, and who is not? and were so hemmed around by those of society, that with their best will, they have affected but little purpose. A fact is also, that as from the obstacles that are placed in the way of female improvements, none of those of the humbler class—the only situation in which women of uncontaminated natural energy could be found—have been able to arrive at that degree of instruction or knowledge, which is sure to give a command over the minds of men generally. This privilege has therefore been exclusively that of the higher or wealthier class of women—those of that class have unhappily never been republican enough *to be sincere*. Such women are too fond of pomp and rank to be impartial in their researches; researches which having been made among the fashionable class only, are consequently little descriptive of nature. It is grievous to see how many females, possessing talents and great power of language, have wasted both in a labyrinth of little insignificant tales; the insipid relation of miserable intrigues, and the unmeaning jargon used in what is termed genteel, but would more properly be called, *idle life*.

Some too, and those women of great talents, have fallen into the mistake, that the occupations in which women are generally employed, were causes of their moral degradation. This was warring with an effect, not with a cause; for in lieu of its being the occupations of women that degrade them, it is their degradation that has originated the thousand trivial occupations, whereby not only themselves are engaged, but which to gratify the caprice of their idle wants, thousands of half-starved men are laboring. One human being will have assiduously worked a *whole year*—and perhaps more, for the poor pittance of scarce three pence a day, that a lady shall wear a costly veil, which ten chances to one, on the first day's wearing, she will have made unfit for use. However, although it is certain that all *that*, which has, as yet, been attempted by woman, towards the meliorating of the situation of her own sex, being predicated on error, has effected not any actually or apparently good purpose; it is nevertheless still true, that woman alone can, and must be the maker of her own happiness—and through herself of that of society—else *she* nor *it* will ever enjoy happiness.

When I look around me, and see the many occasions in which

In their actions women show themselves, wanting not only in intelligence but in common sense, I am apt to recur to some of the Hindoo theories, that of the Menu, for instance, and believe, that, as regards the women of our cycle, the great spirit, on awakening from his periodical repose, did not fully expend the female portion of his essence—at least such a notion is as reasonable to entertain, as that nature shall have gifted woman, with every advantage of the most perfect organization, that its power shall be inert.

At what time, or period the event or events took place that have originated so disastrous a change in the female part of our species is what, indeed, has baffled our closest researches—we can but suppose it the result of some of those, to man, unaccountable revolutions and fatalities that *do* take place in the moral as in the physical world. We cannot any more doubt that a time has been when women were rational beings and capable of self-government, than we can disbelieve in the convulsions that have agitated and changed the entire face of this globe; but at the same time we are as unable to state *when*, *how* and *why* this disordered state of things in the female mind has taken place; as to say why mountains have risen where seas watered, woods have sunken where oceans now roll.

However, that women are endowed with as great rational powers of mind as they are exceedingly lovely in form, we have only to prove by consulting, first what traditions have left us on that head; second, our own common sense, and look into the sources of all our ideas. As regards tradition; if women did not at some antecedent ages give proof of their greatness of mind, how comes it that the ancients up to the remotest antiquity personified as female and feminine all that which is grand, true, virtuous, and beneficent in nature? how that the Germans make the sun, yes the *sun*, a female? how if women are not rational beings, if rationality and all its consequent rights exist not in them and *should not exist for them*, how came we, I ask, by the idea that it does and should? Can you point out one single idea that enters or generates in the mind of man, that has not its origin in some real fact or real thing, which has impressed itself on one or another of his inward, or outward senses? No; and not any greater proof of the truth that women are gifted with all the capacities of rationality and self-government to a high, a supreme degree can be wanted, than that we have the *idea* they are so; and why? because it is as impossible for an idea to generate, where there is not a fact to generate from, as that there should be motion without life, or life without motion. But while with me a moment and exam-

the one or more of the traditions left us by the ancients in support of what at some remote, far remote times, was the superiority or at least *non-inferiority* of the female sex. By whom is wisdom personified? by a woman. From the Godhead she came forth; not weak, infant like, half-grown and ignorant of purpose rose she from the throing brains of Jupiter. *He* whose awful nod is the fiat of worlds; but in all the perfection, the dignity of womanhood, armed too against all possible chance, does the female goddess show. Perseus on beholding the dire effect of Medusa's mournful gaze, the giant Atlas and race frozen to an arid rock, fit emblem of his hardened nature: horror struck and filled with dread, he reverts to the danger of a weak imperfect mortal's possessing so appalling, life congealing gift. "No; not to man belongs such power: not in his hands shall so fatal a present be safe. To wisdom—to Minerva—a *woman*, alone appertains the right of wielding so fearful a weapon." And straitway to her Ægis he affixes the mournful gorgon's head. Whom do we thank for the discovery of the best staff of life, the wheaten sheaf? a woman. Ceres it was who first taught man to draw a purer, milder and more nourishing food from the wheat—mark well with what maternal anxiety she taught him to spread the golden harvest along the plains. Even down to the days of Homer, a hallowed consciousness of the sacredness of women is easily perceived. The poet dare not bear her faults to view—with what a veil of beauty and compassion and regret does he not cover them in Helena—nay, he makes Paris at last, by a deed of valour, prove himself not wholly *unworthy* of the love of this faithless fair. Poets, indeed, have in all ages shown themselves wholly impressed by a devotional awe towards the female sex. They make not man alone revenge wrongs committed against it, but the gods, nature herself, all arise to punish the impious offender, nay, Shakspeare does not even allow the possibility of like crimes to be consummated—but by supernatural agency arrest its completions. But it would take days and fill volumes to cite the instances and show examples whereby traditions, fabulists, historians, poets, songsters, painters, and statuaries have done homage to the character and *exalted intent* of women. But why go off from the present moment from among yourselves! when in fact in your own proceedings; on this very spot, are proofs of the high estimation in which you own the female sex to have been held. Have you not called from afar, the chisel of the artist, to delineate before you the speaking tales of old, of women's worth, excellence and power? and that too as models for you to imitate, as emblems of what you would be thought, as guards over your ac-

tions, as dictators of what those actions shall be ! I would ask, how is this all? whence those imaginaries of the ancients; and whence too your *earnest* imitation of them? Is it but a farce, a phantasmagoria of the brain, a simple mimicry, an insipid compliment, a fastidious gallantry, a bait to obtain what your, so much boasted of, superior, physical strength, your equally known, greater minded-cunning can get you always: I ask, is it *true*, or is it false? Ah! is there one mind, one heart that will not recognize, that will not feel these grand allegories, this universal accordance to be the traditions, the assertings of facts—facts lost to us 'tis true, and of the having-been of which we might almost doubt, were it not for a secret intimation within, a latent spark of intelligence there, which tells us, it was so; and can be so again.

It is worthy of notice that among most of those ancient people, whose simplicity of manners, may be said to have approached nearer to a state of nature, the women had over the men a secret empire, which these thought to be the effect of a supernatural charm. The idea, that the divinity communicated itself especially to women, has, in fact, been general with all nations. It was the opinion of the ancient Germans, the Britons; and of all the Scandinavian tribes. Among the greatest nations of antiquity, religious ceremonies were mostly officiated by females. The greater number of oracles was given out by them, witness the most celebrated of those, that of Apollo at Delpha. Speaking of it we cannot pass over, that most beautiful and impressive allegory of Apollo and the Muses. He the god of day, the sun, emblem of life and heat brings down and communicates the sciences and the arts, to whom? to woman! Even the Hebrews had their Pythonians, (a circumstance of some importance to notice as most of the Jewish institutions were modelled on those of the Hindoos—which last are extravagantly unfavourable to women. The gloomy mind of the followers of the Veda and the Menu being, like that of the Gnostics, averse to all the smiling beauties of nature,) we also find, that as late as the times of the Cæsars, the predictions of the Egyptian women had great credit at Rome; and we know the respect in which that powerful people held the Sybills. In short, with all savage nations, every subject which seemed to bear the character of supernatural agency, such as religious ceremonies, magic, medicine, &c. &c. was, and among those of this day, is still the office of women. It is curious to relate, that our present gallantry and *form* of respect shown to women, is but a faint rest of those sacred, dignified, and lively sentiments of love and veneration towards them, formerly introduced—by whom?

by the uncultivated hords living on the Baltic, and inhabiting the impenetrable forests of the north; and as remarkable fact is, that the nearer we are the immediate descendants of those barbarians and among the people now dwelling on the very soil, once their rude homes, the greater is the rational standing of women in society, and the more reciprocal are the sentiments exercised towards them. The German Shakspeare, Schiller, never could speak of women, but with devotion. His opinion of their sanctity actuated him to solemn compassion and sympathy at even those of their actions most calculated to excite horror. Who has read his "Infanticide" and not wept with the wretched mother! Gœthe, in his "Quarto Tasso" makes the princess say: "Ah! if men there were, capable of knowing the truth of a woman; who could appreciate the treasure of love and dignity which is preserved in her breast, then would we again see our *primitive days*; then would we celebrate our golden wedding." We know also that *Cato* thought an offence given to woman, a sacrilege against the most sacred thing in the world.

Before I part with the subject of the alleged mental incapacity in women, I would inquire if perchance the bondage of prejudices in which the female mind is held, be not a capital cause of its want of energy. I have already said the faculty of the mind like those of the body could be perfected, but through a continuation of appropriate exercises, which exercises, consist in observations; for we must not suppose that the mind is susceptible of change; no! in itself it is fixed as Byron beautifully expresses it in his, "When coldness wraps this suff'ring clay," and its only use in our present state, is that of observation — This last must of course be unincumbered and left supremely free in opportunities; an advantage which we know is, with but few exceptions, denied to women; so much so, that even their physiognomy bespeaks that vacancy of thought, supposed to be the effect of the mind being unemployed. Often when in the midst of those crowds that are to be found in large cities, such as churches, theatres, markets, routs, &c. &c. it has been one of my peculiar delights to examine and scan the countenance of those around me; and whilst I have generally been able to describe in the expression of the men's countenance, a pretty correct idea of what was then the nature of their reflections; on the contrary in almost every instance, that of the female, except peasants, presented nothing but a blank. In fact, we are so accustomed to this want of expression in women, that if we do chance to meet with one on whose brow the lines of thoughts are discernable, we reproachingly apostrophise her, with the title of a "mas-

line looking women." Those too, of the young females, whose face of happy ease and innocent gayety bespeak a mind that had too much natural buoyancy to be cramped by the gloomy demureness of prejudice, envy and ignorance, are quickly styled giddy indecent girls, who, it is farther prophesied, will turn out no better than they should be; a charitable way of saying every thing that is bad of them; and as prophets are careful of the sure fulfilment of their prediction, these careless children of a bountiful nature are but too generally caught in its toils. Is not the thus enchaining of the mind a greater injustice than keeping the body in durance? I have seen inflicted on the house of Ferrara, the punishment due to the wrongs of Tasso, yet it was not the mind of the poet that Alphonso imprisoned, it was but his body; the dross of himself. What will they deserve, who make captive the mind !!!

But if you must be made more sensible still of the debasing effect of slavery, take for example, a Russian *serf*, and a *Greek* slave, at the Port, and trace, if you can, the resemblance in THIS to a Lyncurgus, a Leonidas, an Aristides, a Solon, a Demosthenes, &c. &c. &c. in *that* to one of your hardy western farmers, what, you cannot?—and why can you not? but from the simple fact, that there is not any parallel to be found between slavery and freedom, and that, as these old Greeks were, what your farmers now are, *freemen*—not any line of equality can be between them and the ignorant Russian serf, or the equally contemptible modern Greek. And I ask, is not a woman a slave too? Her mind despised as being weak, herself made so passive, that virtue even, is not virtue in her, but fear, or at least prejudice? No wonder then she should neglect to exercise her mental faculties; she should not seek to act from principle. Tell me I beseech you, what inducement has she to cultivate a power, which is condemned to a state of lasting energy! What encouragement to the cheerful practice of duties which she has not the choice of admitting as duties? What excitement to search after improvements, which have no other aim than the mere chances of caprice? for says the "Encyclopædia Britannicæ," a very big book to contain so small a matter, "women should make themselves acquainted with music and drawing, &c. as those light accomplishments will furnish them with additional means of pleasing us; (it is the men that speak) but they are not to study more of these arts than will answer the *end* proposed," (see article "Female Education,") I quote from memory and may have forgotten the very words, but the sense is correct.) It is not therefore for purposes of mental enjoyment and rationality, that women are to learn any thing, nor are they

to learn any thing well, but have only a smattering of what not—sufficient to aid them to amuse the men, when these will condescend to be amused, and to divert spoiled children from long crying, &c. A noble use this, I confess, of the faculties of observation given to the human mind by its God ! We may well look with fear on death, and dread what we know not will come after it—for if any thing merit a CHRISTIAN HELL it is the act we are guilty of in perverting the munificent intents of our kind *Creator*, and contemning His works ! Let us be just to our fellow beings; not cruel to any thing that has life, and improve our faculties. This is all that is required of us; and if we but do that, we may meet death with confidence. But to speak a few words more of the right man has to be *free*, and of the beneficial influence of freedom on the improvements of the mental faculties, I will ask, what induced your forefathers to leave their countries and their homes—a *country*; and a *home* ! words of magic sounds—what could move them, I ask again, to abandon *these*; to seek new abodes in a savage, and unknown land; far from the graves of their sires ? Every child that but lisps, can answer this. It was the hope, the desires of liberty that bore them on. It was that which aided their weariness, and softened their home-sick grief. But the women; how is it, that having shared equally, more than equally, they being mothers, in the regrets and in the dangers, they have not received the benefits promised to the reward of those dangers, the compensations for their losses ? their chains are now as strongly riveted as heretofore, themselves not any more free than when they left their native dales. Have you no sympathy for this injustice done them ? If any among you recollect the hour at which breaking off from the gripes of tyranny, he first hailed himself *free* ! Him, I address, as best able to comprehend the full sense of the term, a word at which the mind springs forth and expands, bounding along the vast and interminable plains of thought, purpose and will, as does the young horse of the prairies, his mane, as the breath of *freedom* on the ether, gracefully floating in the wind.

This vigour is to be found but in freedom, *to be free* is what every man understands. That sentiment is so ingrafted in his nature, that whilst we scarcely ever succeed in civilizing a savage; civilized men readily go back to a state of nature. A proof of the exceeding accordance of liberty with the mind, since it is cheaply bought at the price of every bodily comfort and ease. Must women continue to be deprived of a blessing so necessary to human nature, deprived of that great strengthener of the *mind*, how can this *last* be not weak, most weak ? It was said of old, that Jupiter deprived slaves of half their mind, a com-

prehensive allegory, which implies that whilst slavery brutalizes the man, it renders him insensible of his degradation. May this never be the fact with women! better, far better they should suffer, than by becoming callous to the injustice of the wrongs done them, they forego the opportunity of redress.

One remark more on this subject claims our attention; is not this system of inferiority in the female sex, and of woman's dependence on men subvertive of the laws of nature and of the happiness which should result from mutual affection? If man were to devote his whole life to the framing of a system of human happiness, he could not come up to an order of things as sublime as that contained in the necessities of the two sexes. None but a God could have held so just a balance of perfection, accord and mutual dependence. Why not take that for our rule of practice, we have been indulging ourselves ages in these phantoms of superiority and inferiority of body and mind; and the effect is that happiness itself has become a chimera. Were it not better to go back to reality, and not beat thus about in the delusion of deformed dreams? and one thing which we cannot be deceived in, is, that not any true affection will exist where desparity is insisted on. And yet affection is so necessary to man! when old age and poverty and misfortunes of any sort come upon us, then it is that our notions of superiority vanish. A kind word, from what we once thought the most humble of our fellow-beings is now a soothing, a balmy cordial to the suffering heart. Away then with these antic, these buffoonading importance, lest we be left no other comforter and solace in the time of affliction than the humiliating recollection of our once self-plumed greatness. Yes! let us now, while we can, draw closer and closer to each other, so that we shall not feel cold and comfortless, when youth and fortune are fled.

A fourth cause of objection to female improvement deserves our most serious attention, for though grounded on false premises it nevertheless is the effect of compassion towards that devoted sex: namely, it would, say those who wish them well, it would *dissolve* the delusion by which they now are surrounded, understand well I pray you, instruction would dissolve the delusion by which women are now surrounded, and in which as the advocate for that delusion assert they enjoy at least a negative state of happiness, whilst on the contrary were they educated as men are, their every feelings would shrink before the fact of their moral degradation: ignorance is therefore a good, a beneficent deprivation that keeps them from being sensible of this, and of the secondary, the less than secondary standing they hold, nay, keep them from seeing as plain as the sun at noon-

day, that *now* they hold not any rational standing in the rank of men. Ignorance is therefore to serve as an anodyne, which shall allay the cruel smart of their un pitying, unjust, and most capricious fortunes!—It were, say some, cruel—most cruel to make them see, that the beautiful tints which spread along the morning horizon are but vapours; that the sea of gold, which girts the west at eve, is nought also but vapours: in short, that these, like their own hopes, prospects and joys are but optic delusions. Mark well, I beseech you, those are the kind, the beneficent, the rational, the *just* results to be effected by ignorance in women; and I must not forget one of its most important *ends*, want of knowledge is to be the *guard* of women's innocence of heart, of *their virtue*! I cannot forbear adding, of myself, another, and no less important advantage, that will come out of this want of rationality in women; yes, it will prevent them from awakening to a full conviction of *what they now are*, compared too with what they have the inherent power of *being*.

But it is not my intention to refute this cause of objection to knowledge in women, as I may in part have done some of the last; that is, by employing the ready arms of irony: for, whilst on the one hand the objection is started in kindly love, a feeling no heart can resist; on the other, the objection itself is grounded on a supposition on the side of women themselves, which as I shall have occasion to prove in the coming lectures, has alone had a most disastrous and directly blasting effect, not only on their individual happiness, but through them on that of society. But, my God!—it is it is, that very delusion I want to dissolve—I want to lay open these deceptive views. I would have all things stripped of their false draperies and stand *there* clothed but in their native truth before the eyes of women: and in that consists the advantages I promise myself—yes, in that happy prospect I see a new world; a world of delight opening before me. Beauties on beauties, arise to gladden my sight, I am drunk with charms, and yet I feel calm, and still! How is this? where is that confusion of thought, those jealous fears, those angry feelings, those envious sentiments, that bitterness of disappointment, that ceaseless discontent, that languid weariness, that sickness of body, of mind, of heart, where? gone passed away with the unsubstantial phantasm on which they fed. *Nature*, when seen in her *proper person*, is as invigorating to the soul, as her robe of green is healthful to the eye. We accustom ourselves easily, to the sight of things around us; be they ever so magnificent, habit makes them familiar. They are mute, for to us ignorance makes them mute, it follows that they

have no hold on our attention, we forget them, we see them daily, yet we see them not; and to speak in the language of Blair, it is as if nature was hidden from our inattentive view by the clouds of her own grandeur. But knowledge comes, and a soul breathes from these before apparently inanimate objects. We now hear them speak, see them move in various order and progression, each with fixed and undeviating intent, all meeting in correspondent harmony. Think you this is not grand and lovely enough? Think you, I ask, that the philosopher enjoys the morning less, because he knows that her soft hues are caused by the thousand rays of light dipping in the gray drops of aqueous vapours, which they may be said to drink, and is what thus paints to the eye, her rosy fingers parting the curtain of day? surely not, for on the contrary, he feels himself surrounded by life and action, by the certainty that in nature there is not any *chance*; nothing mean, not an atom which is not important to the whole, and is the effect of a Supreme order; of a Cause that cannot err.

Believe me, so far from its being disadvantageous to women, that they should know things as they are, it will most assuredly be the guarantee of their happiness. Do we not experience daily, that in this-and-that we have been disappointed, and then we blame nature, say happiness is not in nature, whilst all the time we were seeking it *out* of her, and we consequently were disappointed. I hold, therefore that woman should be made acquainted with every thing connected with life; she should be taught to dissect nature in all her most minute connexion with herself; she should be made to comprehend closely all that which the mind can embrace out of herself and in herself. Her happiness should not be predicated on delusion, but on *facts*—and such happiness will not only last with her, but it will reflect from her to the remotest circle of her influence. Tell me, I pray you, what does delusion bring? what in fact is delusion? If you say that delusion is that buoyancy of youth which sees ready charms in all, and every object, without caring to seek for those that can be found but through the aid of *will* and of reason; there I agree with you; and moreover it is one of the munificent intentions of nature that it should be so. The youthful mind is left to sport in careless gaiety till it has acquired vigour enough to think; and if you ask me why, answer me rather first, why a man is not born at once six feet high; but do not tell me that youthful delusion appertains to woman any more than to man, and that the happiness of *those* consists in their continuing infants in mind all their lives. What can you expect from such a woman? can you blame her if afterwards she

should sacrifice her duties, duties she scarcely knows by any other name than that of fashion, to clinging to some fond delusion; and when the time of delusion is past, for pass it will, and soon too, she may get poor—an inveterate enemy to delusion this; her beauty will fade—what then has she left? how will this youthful vision of an hour become settled into a reality? how become a useful, a valuable member of society? What sort of a mother will this child of delusion and ignorance make? what an instructor will she prove to her offspring? poor innocents! from *that* which nature intended to them to be so bounteous a source, to draw only folly and perversion: and why? because you have not educated the mother's mind to any just and superior end. Ah! a sudden recollection of an instance of the many examples of the mournful effect of this fatal delusion and ignorance in women comes over my mind. Do we not see that the most horrible, heartless, and mercilessly cruel of all invented punishments is inflicted on the unhappy female, who shall have passed—idly, unknowingly, or through being forced perhaps, passed over a certain barrier. She is driven from society, from the communion of her own sex, debarred of all sympathy but that of vice. Parents themselves will spurn the sufferer from their doors; a mother, yes, a mother will refuse the pale and weak-worn suppliant a place, a little corner place at her board, whilst gossips daily glutton in dainties there, and, a brother too will study all the lying pretence at honor to rob the while, of a little gold, of some little goods—nay, of some mere trinkets, perhaps this already so poor a victim: and to complete her wo! If she be a mother, her dear ones will be torn from her; taught to despise, to pass her by with derision; *that womb*, which bore them, that maternal bosom from which they fed, on which they so often were pillowed to sleep, is now by them rent with an anguish far, far greater, far more agonizing, than the throes of birth; the misery of the grave. Is this not true? and yet, you will not give women *that*, and that alone which can, and most assuredly, will prevent her from falling into so dire a state; and moreover, will forever banish from among us the opportunities of those violations of all natural laws, these crimes against God and man to which her little sins, this deluded child's sins are virtues.

It is not to be denied that women are naturally inclined to virtue and its attendant delicacy of sentiments, to an exceedingly high degree. This disposition is in fact common to both sexes—and we have to lament, that with the English, and what is still more afflicting, with every nation, the moral habits of which are modeled on those of the British, sentiments of sex^u

al delicacy should have been banished from the catalogue of masculine virtues, as being (what is ignorantly meant an insult) "*effeminate*;" nay, this grossness is so general, that even the most sublime means of happiness given to man, a present that could have emanated but from the DIVINE MIND, *the union of the sexes, and the consummation of the intent of their existence*, is made a subject of low talk, and of vicious practices—and not only that, but even innocently meant language is tortured into significances, over which vulgarism holds a sway as absurd as it is abhorrent. When first I learned the English language, I was brought into continued contact with this list of words that have been proscribed from what is termed genteel society, a squeamishness not only originating in a want of chastity, but meant *not* to chace away *low ideas*, but to call them to mind. Were it not that the like is beneath the dignity of this lecture, I could cite hundreds of instances to the exposure of this effect of the putrid moral state of society, and which has attained such a height, as even to defile the pages of literature. Who will read a late writer on mythology and not shrink at the perversion of taste that could have given to those grand allegories of the ancients, such gross and distorted forms. The Germans, a people who, as Tacitus remarks of their observance of the laws, are virtuous from the love of virtue. think it *not* unmanly to be modest. In that land, it is, that both bride-groom and bride meet, their minds equally chaste, hearts beating with expectations of delights to each as yet, equally unknown, and such a moment is never forgotten, nor is it in the power of misfortunes or enmity to *divorce* such a pair. But wherefore talk of this here, where English morality prevails; what have the *clumsy* minded customs of the Germans to do with the *genteel* ones of more refined British origin? I repeat, that delicacy of sentiments both as to the economy of the body, and the feelings of the heart, is peculiar to the female sex. To prove this, I need but bring to mind two of the many circumstances related by Plutarch, as instances of that fact. Speaking of the inhabitants of one of the Archipelagos, among whom the women had great national privileges, he says, that during a time of seven hundred years. not one instance of weakness in a young female, or inconstancy in a married one could be cited. At another time he makes mention of the alarming frequency of suicide among the female population of one of the neighboring isles. Crowds of young girls, arrived at that age at which nature asserts her power; unable to bear the oppressive languor of desire, would seek in death a relief from its pain, hundreds of young maidens thus perished yearly; not any means had as yet been found to

prevent this too distressing a consequence of a fervid sensibility. Spring, the season of love, was there a time of death; at last a law was enacted consigning the *bodies* of those that died by self-inflicted means, to be exposed to vulgar gaze through the public streets: this had the desired effect. Those females who would fearlessly have braved the horrors of the grave, could not support the idea that even their lifeless form should be thus exposed; and from that moment the commission of suicide ceased. A thousand like examples could be advanced to the honour of women—particularly those of the remotest antiquity, “who,” says the celebrated author whom I have just quoted, “to a great courage, joined an exceeding pride and jealousy of honor.”

I will sum up what has been said, by advancing: 1st, That instruction so far from incapacitating women for the occupations assigned them, as their part of social necessities, it will render them the more ready and able to fulfil those occupations with order and efficacy; for as those offices will no longer, in that case, be with them a thing of caprice, fashion or bidding, but a self-imposed duty, founded on responsibility, the execution of them will not be accompanied by that notion of intended insignificance, which renders them uninteresting, and too often offensive. Besides it will have the happy effect of doing away the thousand trivial occupations, in which, in accordance with the whimsies of fashion, women are now constantly employed.

2d, There is so much ridicule in the idea of vindicating women’s rights to knowledge against the presumption that it will spoil their beauty, that it had been more decorous to have passed it over without notice. But as this obstacle, idiotic as it is, has through our misconceived idea of beauty, become one of the most difficult to surmount, it ceases to be unimportant; therefore I will advance, that knowledge is perhaps one of the most advantageous auxiliaries to personal charms that could have been devised; as it will clothe them over with dignity; a charm which will out last poverty and age.

3d, It is not want of capacity, but want of exercising their capacity through appropriate means of observation, that originates the apparent inferiority of the female mind, and their consequent want of rational usefulness to themselves and society—so much are women debarred from the opportunity of reasoning, that were their capacity of being mothers suddenly to be made a subject of calculation—I honestly believe that innumerable doubts will be started on that also. And again, by depriving women of freedom, you sink them to the condition of the meanest slave—and take from them all incentive to rational and *moral* action; for it is not to be controverted that bondage is the nursery of folly and of vice.

4th, Knowledge by dissolving the vapours of delusion, which ignorance would keep between woman and the fair face of nature, will enable her to recognize things as they are; and to place her virtue, and consequently her happiness, on a basis secure, because it is that of *truth*: and the result of this will be, that vice will not only cease with her, but the opportunity of crimes in men will no longer exist in society.

I have detained you much too long, whilst my language has been far below the merit of the important subject which I have been desirous of addressing to your consideration. You will, however, find an excuse in the motives that have urged me, thus in spite of my want of proportionate abilities to come before you: for you cannot but be confident that those motives originate in the wish of being useful to the female sex. I am bound to that distinguished, but unhappily *mistaught* portion of humanity, by ties of which I am proud, and if I could for a moment indulge in the belief, that through my humble means, a desire would be awakened in the mind of woman to emulate what nature intended her to be, then would I, notwithstanding my fatal fortune, give myself up to feelings of the sweetest contentment.

--- APOLOGY TO THE PUBLIC.

I beg it to be understood, that not any other cause than that of the most distressing *pecuniary* emergency could have induced me to give the preceding pages to the press. True, a few kind persons who heard them read, did encourage me with their approbation; but whilst I felt grateful for the motives that actuated that approbation, I knew full well that the *subject*, not the composition, deserved it. Yet I have an excuse in the fact, that want of school-taught abilities ought not to deter us from endeavouring to further what we believe to be for the happiness of man. It is only by the continued and *collected* exertions of the many that great obstacles to moral perfection can be removed; and the trial I now make of sharing in those exertions is the result of the philanthropy, which for years I have made my study to exercise.

I have to solicit every indulgence for the many typographical errors in *this* first number of my *lectures*, for independent of an author being certainly the worst person that can be chosen to correct his own composition, in the present case, my state of mind is an additional objection to such an office. Corrections of those errors which however go to pervert the sense of my lines, are printed on the reverse side of the title page; the remainder is left to the judgment of the reader.

B. O'SULLIVAN.

May, 1st, 1828.



MAY 28 1975



THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.

WIDENER
CANCELLED
MAR 2 1982
MAR 1 6 1982
7396806

WIDENER
DEC 13 2001
BOOK DUE

WIDENER
SEP 2 1997
SEP 10 1997
CANCELLED
BOOK DUE

STALL STUB
CHARGE
CANCELLED
STALL STUB
CHARGE

